

**Linda Clair**  
**Five-day Meditation Retreat**  
**Kallara Conference Centre, Australia – June 2019**  
**Transcription from Audio Recordings**

**File 4c – Tuesday afternoon discussion session**

Linda: Who wants to go first?

Question: This has been going on for a while in my mind, I've been thinking a bit. When I was sitting in front of you I had this experience and I felt it was very significant. I remember during my first retreat I had that glimpse, something got unleashed inside, and it just sustained itself, it was beyond my control. But this time during the first half of the sit I was sustaining it, because a lot of things that you have said were connecting. You said, "Every thought starts as a sensation," and you have said, "You watch the movement away from here, from now." And I have been doing this homework again and again of breathe and watch, and I have really internalised that. So I have been doing that and you breathe and you watch.

So what was happening during that experience was there are these sensations. Every sensation the thought would arise, and I've been observing this. For example, your stomach starts to grumble and all of a sudden that sensation takes you out with thoughts of, "Food, ah, what's going to be there for lunch?" But if I was looking at it as just sensation, that movement I was feeling, especially when I sat there in front of you, I felt that that movement away from here – I was not going there. Even if the thoughts were coming to me, that glue that holds those thoughts to me was not working for that sit. Because you were there and this whole thing about putting oneself into your hands – I really want to surrender, I really want to let go.

But obviously there is this resistance – it's just not possible, so preparation. This whole thing – the movement away from here, and those sensations, and these things that we attach, this urge to comment, this habit – I just want you to unpack this a little bit. I want to understand it because it took an incredible amount of energy and I was really exhausted after that. I am able to still do it but not sustain it – I can't. During that sit I felt you really strongly and the edges of my body disappeared. So I just want you to unpack this and tell me what I have to do. Obviously that is my mantra: you breathe and you watch, every situation without my eyes closed or anything. Can you please unpack this a bit more for me?

Linda: Explain it a bit more you mean?

Question: Yeah, what is happening? I want to understand this better, these sensations and my movement, this tendency to comment on any sensation that arises.

Linda: So it started from when you were very young. Who knows, it doesn't matter when really. For everyone it's a bit different, but it started when you were very young. And this sense of identity – it's really instilled in us from our parents, from society. They are always saying, "You, you, you, me,

me, me. We're separate. You are this; I am that." And it's through no fault of their own because they've learnt it from their parents who learnt it from their parents.

Essentially that movement away is a fear of being here, really here now. Because, as I was saying before, when you die it will be now. You can't pretend that it's yesterday or tomorrow, you just can't put it off. As you're dying it's like, "Ah, so it's really now," and there's no escaping from it. What we're taught from when we're really young is that you are this body, I am this body, this is where I start and this is where I end. So if you believe –if you've been taught and you've learned – that this is who you are there's going to be a deep fear of the death of this body because that's the end of you. So this fear of death creates this desire to not be here, because we think that by not being here now we're going to avoid death, escape it somehow, because it will always be yesterday or tomorrow. It will never actually be now. And most people's behaviours, their entire life, is based on this. It's really quite shocking when you start to realise how deeply embedded in our society the avoidance of being here, which is fear of being here, is. Everything really is based on that. It's a distraction from really being here. You just have to walk along the street and watch people – there's virtually no one who's really in their bodies.

So that movement, that avoidance, becomes habitual. So it starts to become natural, and we're taught to do it, we're encouraged to do it. And so there's a great fear of letting it go because we start to identify with this thinking self – that's who we are. And we become quite addicted to thinking, to not being here.

So thinking is actually a very slow process. The speed of it compared to the speed of now is just so slow. It's like this clunky old mechanical thing compared to now. Now is incredibly fast, so fast that it's still. So as you're moving away from thinking, the thought – you're reversing – it's taking an incredible amount of energy, and that's why you feel so tired. And every time you do that it speeds up your consciousness, maybe just a bit, but that builds up. But it's incredibly tiring. So, bit by bit, your consciousness quickens because you're coming closer to now. And you start to see what was impossible at first – to really catch a thought, to catch the thinking – starts to become very, very possible. And when you realise that, as you did, it's a huge thing because you start to see that what you thought was total control over you – you just couldn't break away from it – is actually possible in you.

I can say all this stuff but it doesn't mean anything much until you experience it yourself. And that's what this practice is all about, your own experience. Learning through your own experience, not through me telling you anything. When I'm talking energetically you will sometimes feel something and something will really get you at certain times, but really, it's only through your own experience and your own realisation through your own body that will take you to now, to where you are, in your body. So that movement is motivated by fear. Thinking is a very slow, cumbersome process that involves time. Now is timeless. Everything is now, and it's just so incredibly fast.

Question: I felt that when I was with you, when I was free from the glue holding me. I felt you, I felt like you were this big massive space. Like you were really, really fast and you were – if you see sci-fi movies – like a launch into hyperspace.

Linda: That's what happens. With enlightenment it is like you suddenly escape the gravity of the mind, or you could compare it to earth, and suddenly you're in space. It's like this turbo boost and suddenly you're up there looking down on all this stuff that you thought was everything, this little

world of the mind, and you just realise everything. It's incredible. So when you're around someone who's in that state you are going to get pulled into that orbit I suppose, that space. And it is going to help you because it will be speeding your consciousness up, and you'll feel different things around someone like that. Sometimes you will feel like that and other times it will be hitting blocks and there'll be quite a bit of emotion and self-consciousness and stuff like that.

But what I feel too is the longer you're in this state – if you're really working with it – it depends what you do with this state too. Because that's a big thing that's not really spoken about a lot, but while you're in this state you're still practicing, but in a different dimension really. So, the longer you're in this state, depending on a few things, the wider that field becomes and the faster you become. You just become faster and faster until eventually there is death of the body and you just dissolve into the ether.

Question: You feel the body, the breath, and I was feeling it, but the edges around the body they disappear. You feel the sensations but the edges around you and me sort of disappear.

Linda: Mmm.

Question: It's really cool. Thankyou.

Question: Just feeling a bit charged and nervous. I want to say something but it feels inauthentic because I've thought about it. I feel this all the time actually. I've had lots of questions through the retreat and it's been interesting to see how many people's statements or questions have really specifically spoken to experiences or questions I had, and sometime your responses as well. Specifically, words or little phrases that I'd actually thought, and I thought that was really interesting. I didn't know if that was reflective or the group resonating together, or just because this was such a common experience for everyone, or maybe both?

Linda: I'd say both. Particularly as a retreat goes on it starts to become this mass, and everyone gets closer and closer. And maybe particularly because they're not talking much to each other that starts to develop. And it's one of the reasons I don't let people come in later during a retreat anymore because it really does disturb the whole thing. And it's too much for them to come into this mass of energy. So everyone starts to resonate. It's incredible. To start off everyone's just come in from their lives and getting it together.

Question: I forgot now the other thing I wanted to ask. I feel really nervous and I'm going to leave after this.

Linda: So just take a minute before you drive and be careful.

Question: I was really charged after the last retreat and the time between then and now was really chaotic. But when I arrived here I was really clear again. It felt like I was here one weekend and just went away for a week and came back.

Linda: And if you come again it will feel the same. It won't feel like you've been away. It will feel like a continuation of this. So good.

Question: Yes, I've had a lot of realisations over this process. It's been interesting. Something came up in the last retreat and it answered a lot of questions for me in a way. But now I've realised it's just the start of unravelling how I'm seeing things. It's been really good.

Linda: So you just unravel bit by bit, not all at once.

Question: Yes, just new ways of peeling away, about how I'm seeing things around me. I'm realizing that I don't actually see anything for what it is. I just see my thoughts. It's all imaginary really to me.

Linda: Are you sitting in between retreats? (Yes.) Keep that going, it's really important. Just stay stable.

Question: I wanted to touch base. I'm running a bit on empty at the moment with the chest thing, and I don't know how much resistance is making me more tired, or how much is the chest thing. I rested this afternoon, and the body was grateful, but I was so restless in my mind and I couldn't relax. It feels like it's a bit of a war going on and I really don't want the bad guys to win.

Linda: They're not the bad guys.

Question: I don't mean the infection I mean the resistance.

Linda: So did I! 😊 The chest infection is a chest infection. Probably because you're too busy, partly. Are you still busy in your life? Every retreat I say the same thing to you.

Question: This (infection) has been here for a couple of weeks now.

Linda: And you've still been working.

Question: I did have a week off. And I was determined to come here, though I didn't want to infect others. Yeah, it's been a hell of a year actually. (Laughing.) I can blame it on all sorts of things.

Linda: Well, it's all up to you in a way, when it comes down to it. So when you're sick like this listen to your body. Don't sit too much in here – rest when you can, and don't feel like you're missing out because you're not. And you're here and you made it here despite feeling really unwell. It's when you get home that's important – when you don't rest, you just keep going. And you've got to stop sometime or else you're going to get really sick. And I say this every time and you've just got to do it. If you're going to put this first you've got to listen to your body a bit more.

Question: I think that's the thing. To really get to the point that this is first.

Linda: Well, do it before you die. Because it's too late when suddenly you're dying and you go, "Oh, I should have put this first." Look at what you want to do in your life and what's most important and what you don't *need* to do. You know, do you need to be running around so much? It takes a while to get used to not doing that if you've been a really busy person. But once you start to get used to it it's actually a really amazing thing and a really good practice. It doesn't mean you're not busy at all and you just lie around all the time, but there is a balance. You really need to look at that. But during this retreat just rest when you can and sit when you can. Don't push yourself at all. Just

survive the retreat. Don't worry too much what's happening the rest of the time. The fact that you're here is really enough.

Question: Yes, I got over the guilt thing after the first day. I heard you say to R. it's good to go and rest.

Linda: Yes, so it's the same for everyone. If you're really tired don't push it, go and have a rest during a sit or whatever.

Question: I wish it wasn't so hard to let go. It's really hard to let go of who I am, or who I think I am.

Linda: Who you think you are, it's not really who you are. You've just got to stop running.

One thing I was going to say to you S. about your body, when you were asking yesterday about using your body a bit more, I'd say also look at doing – and you probably already do – things that you really enjoy doing with your body. You know, pleasurable things that soothe it. Not just all, "I've got to be in my body, be aware of my body." Do some pleasurable things too, and be in your body while you're doing them. It can be just as effective. And give yourself something that you really enjoy.

Question: I've been dancing here in my room, and it gives me such pleasure to move, dance. I've been doing pleasure things, massage.

Linda: Yes, massage, hot baths if you like that.

Question: But I could be a bit more present with it.

Linda: Yes, it's actually harder a lot of the time to be present in pleasure than pain. You have to work a bit harder to be really present.

Question: You keep saying about before you have a sit to affirm with yourself what you're going to be doing. Just say I'm going to be sitting. I find by doing that it's pretty good to set a standard with the sitting.

Linda: It's like you're setting your intention and you go, "I'm going to sit here whatever is thrown at me, I'll keep sitting." And that's the main thing, just to be open, put up with whatever is thrown at you, and deal with it.

What about you D., you've been pretty quiet.

Question: This morning was a so-called "good" sit for me and what made it good was I felt like I was there and I actually saw these thoughts aren't real. And here am I, seventy-one years old, fighting with them. (Laughter goes through this whole question.) It was a fantastic moment, like sock it to me because you're not real! I felt so, "Here I am!" But now, this afternoon, I'm sort of socked out of the playing field. I've been thinking most of the afternoon, hardly with any respite. But here's the question: in a sit like that where you're counting but you know you're doing the sneaky counting where sneaky thoughts are coming in between one and two. You know, you can get to ten but you haven't really felt one breath or anything, but you got yourself to ten. So when you're having "sneaky thoughts count" afternoon sometimes you're there for the breath, but mostly it's because

it's right up in your nose and you can hear it, it's not nice down in your belly. So they're all the terrible things you don't want when you're meditating and still somehow in all of that dreamy, thinky, sneaky, the whole works. A lot of the time I was sitting straight. It's the weirdest thing, mysterious, in how I think it should be and how it is. Thinking how it should be is kind of devastating to you really.

Linda: Yes. Was there a question there?

Question: There's kind of a question: is that okay?

Linda: Yes, it is, it's fine. It's what D. was saying, you just set your intention, "I'm going to sit here – that's it." Whatever happens happens.

Question: But what's sitting here?

Linda: Well, you just said that – you're sitting here! What do you mean, "What's sitting here?"

Question: Well, you don't kind of know you're here. You only partially know you're here.

Linda: Well, that's going to happen, particularly in the afternoon and particularly after a really strong morning where it has been "good." And you're allowed to say "good," just not "bad." 😊 So if you've had a really good, intense, amazing morning it's going to take a lot of energy. Take an incredible amount of energy, so you're going to be tired in the afternoon. I've often described it as treading water, you're just here doing what you can, and doing the counting. So just tread water. You're going to get tired; you're not going to be able to maintain that degree of speed the whole day. So just accept that; don't put yourself down. Don't feel like you're not doing it properly because you are. And it's going to be like that. I always used to put most of my energy into the morning and then the afternoon would be just surviving. And then often I'd have a really amazing evening sit. Especially when I was really tired and I'd go, "Can I sit?" it would often happen. So it's not a waste of energy, it's not a waste of time, it's just treading water, being here, absorbing the energy. Letting your body assimilate that energy that you've taken in in the morning.

Question: Another thing I think is that a sit isn't anything unless you've had an experience like R. where everything is so full of that wild intensity. It really struck me that you said to her that it's the resistance that creates that struggle in the fire.

Linda: But I also said the resistance was very necessary. And that's what was necessary in you this afternoon because you took on so much energy this morning – your body – I don't know what happened but it was probably buzzing. And then if you kept doing that all day it'd probably be a bit much. So in the afternoon, apart from being a bit tired, is just as much as you can take at one time. So in that way you need to be a bit patient.

Question: So what I'm asking is, in that fiery furnace is it the resistance that creates the fire?

Linda: What sort of fire are you talking about?

Question: In the body, when you feel like your bones are white-hot.

Linda: I feel that is the friction – this is just what I feel – the friction of the timeless rubbing up against time. So in that way it sort of is resistance, but it's more friction. Like you're speeding up but your mind is still pulling you back and that's creating heat. You're still speeding up, but your mind is trying to put the brakes on and slow you down, and that creates that heat, which will come and go.

Question: So if you don't have that kind of drama scene going on in a sit – the burning up and the fight with it – I often feel that I have totally failed as a meditator unless I get there. And it takes two and a half hours to get there, and then when I get there it's such a struggle to stay there, with all the time it took for that energy to be enough to really get my attention. Then I fight with it. But if I don't have that experience in a sit I feel I haven't had a good sit.

Linda: If you don't have that experience you don't feel like you've had a good sit? [Yes.] Well, that's rubbish, so forget about that, just leave it. If that happens, sure, but don't aim for it. And don't fight with it. If it does happen, don't fight – try stepping back from the whole thing. I'd say don't aim for any specific experience and there's no such thing as a failed meditator. It's just not possible. We get so indoctrinated with, "This is wrong, you're a failure." Just sit back a bit, take it a bit more as it comes, don't aim for this intense state. It's still an experience. Having said that I did sit for longer periods at times to feel that pain and intensity, and then when it came you can't help but have some resistance with it. But don't do that every time, it will become too much of a habit. So I'd say break it up and sit for shorter periods sometimes, particularly in the mornings. Don't push it too much. See that's more of a challenge than sitting for longer and you've got into too much of a habit of wanting this fight that you see. So I'd say step back a bit and change it around for a while. And then the afternoons might be a bit different too. So tomorrow I want you to be a bit more even. So don't sit through for three hours or however long, sit for an hour, half an hour sometimes – do that. So make the whole day a bit more even tomorrow. See what happens. Change it, because anything can become habitual.

Question: Yes, I'm a bit like an addict.

Linda: I understand how you feel but you need to step back a bit sometimes too. Because you're getting a bit impatient if it's becoming a battle, a bit too impatient, which you sort of need but not too much. Just change it tomorrow – not every time but tomorrow do that.